

four-wheel drive, it should be understood that the invention is applicable to front-steering or two-wheel-drive lawn mowers.

The lawn mower 10 further comprises a power source 18 supported by the frame 12. The power source may be any type known in the art, such as a gasoline-powered, internal-combustion engine. The engine drives a hydraulic pump (not shown) that supplies hydraulic fluid to hydraulic motors (not shown) drivingly connected to the wheels 14 and 16. The lawn mower 10 further comprises an operator's seat 20, and a conventional steering system, including a steering wheel 22, enabling the operator to steer the lawn mower 10. In the illustrated construction, the steering system is hydraulic and is connected to the rear wheels 16 to steer the lawn mower 10.

The lawn mower 10 further comprises front and rear rows 26 and 30, respectively, of cutting deck assemblies 34. More particularly, in the illustrated construction, the lawn mower 10 has three side-by-side front cutting deck assemblies 34 in front of the front wheels 14, and two rear cutting deck assemblies 34 behind the front wheels 14 and in front of the rear wheels 16. As is known in the art, each rear deck assembly 34 is aligned with the gap between two adjacent front deck assemblies 34.

Each of the cutting deck assemblies 34 includes (see Figs. 2-5) a single-spindle mulching deck 38 defining a downwardly opening space 42 (Fig. 4). The deck 38 is located between and supported by a pair of laterally-spaced, generally vertically-extending side plates 46 and 48. The term "lateral" is used

herein to mean the direction from one side of the lawn mower to the other, i.e., perpendicular to the forward-rearward direction. Two front wheels 50 rotate about an axle 54 (Figs. 2 and 3) extending between the side plates 46 and 48 in front of the deck 38, such that each front wheel 50 supports one of the side plates 46 and 48 and the deck 38 for movement over the ground. A rear roller 58 extends between the side plates 46 and 48 and also supports the side plates 46 and 48 and the deck 38 for movement over the ground. The roller 58 is behind the deck 38 and extends across substantially the entire width of the deck 38. The roller 58 resists scalping and stripes the grass.

The deck 38 is mounted on the side plates 46 and 48 such that the height of the deck 38 relative to the ground is adjustable. In the illustrated construction, the deck 38 includes spaced deck plates 66 and 68 (Figs. 3 and 5) extending upwardly adjacent the side plates 46 and 48, respectively. The upper end of each side plate 46 or 48 has thereon (see Fig. 2) generally horizontal, inwardly-extending ears 69 and 70, with the ear 69 adjacent the front of the side plate and the ear 70 adjacent the rear of the side plate. Fixed to the ears 69 and 70 of each side plate 46 or 48 is an elongated plate member 71 having outwardly-extending ears 72 and 73 respectively secured to the ears 69 and 70 by suitable means such as bolts or screws 74. Each side plate 46 or 48 and the corresponding plate member 71 has therein (see Figs. 4 and 6) a series of holes 76. Each of the deck plates 66 and 68 has therein several vertically-spaced

series of holes 78. Bolts 80 extending through holes 76 in the side plates 46 and 48 and in the plate members 71 and through holes 78 in the deck plates 66 and 68 secure the deck 38 to the side plates 46 and 48. The height of the deck 38 is adjusted by changing the holes 78 in the deck plates 66 and 68 and/or the holes in the side plates 46 and 48 and in the plate members 71 through which the bolts 80 extend.

A single spindle 84 (Fig. 4) is mounted for rotation about a generally vertical axis within the space 42 defined by the deck 38. The spindle 84 is driven by a hydraulic motor 88 on top of the deck 38. The above-mentioned pump supplies hydraulic fluid to the motor 88. It should be understood that other means could be used to drive the spindle 84.

A set of cutting blades is mounted on the spindle 84 for rotation therewith. In the illustrated construction, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4, each blade set includes a lower, leading blade 92 and an upper, trailing blade 96. The leading blade 92 has a leading cutting edge and an upwardly angled trailing edge or lift. Preferably, the lift of the leading blade 92 is angled upwardly at an angle of approximately forty-five degrees. The trailing blade 96 has a leading cutting edge for cutting clippings deflected upwardly by the lift of the leading blade 92. The blades are preferably identical to those disclosed in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 02/17,392, filed January 22, 1997, titled "ROTARY LAWN MOWER MULCHING DECK" and assigned to the

assignee hereof. In alternative embodiments of the invention, different blade arrangements can be employed.

Each of the deck assemblies 34 is mounted on the frame 12 by a generally L-shaped, horizontally-extending lifting arm 112, such that each deck assembly is mounted on its own lifting arm 112. The lifting arm 112 has (see Figs. 2 and 3) a laterally-extending inner leg 116 with an inner end connected to the frame 12 for pivotal movement about a generally horizontal axis 120 extending in the forward-rearward direction. The arm 112 also has an outer leg 124 extending in the forward-rearward direction. A cross member 128 is mounted on the outer end of the outer leg 124 for pivotal movement about a generally vertical axis 132 and about a generally horizontal axis 136 extending in the forward-rearward direction. Each of the opposite, laterally-spaced ends of the cross member 128 has thereon (see Figs. 2, 3, 5 and 6) a downwardly and slightly rearwardly extending arm 140. The lower end of one arm 140 is connected to the side plate 46 for pivotal movement about a generally horizontal, laterally-extending axis 144 adjacent the forward ends of the side plates 46 and 48. The lower end of the other arm 140 is connected to the side plate 48 for pivotal movement about the axis 144.

A hydraulic assembly 148 (partially shown only in Fig. 5) connected between the arm 112 and the frame 12 pivots the arm about the axis 120 for lifting and lowering the deck 38. When the deck is lowered for cutting, the hydraulic assembly allows the lifting arm to "float," thereby allowing the deck 38 to move

vertically relative to the frame 12. The connection of the deck 38 to the arm 112 via the cross member 128 allows the deck 38 to pivot relative to the frame 12 about the three mutually perpendicular axes 132, 136 and 144. This mounting arrangement enables the deck 38 to adjust to undulating terrain, thereby substantially avoiding scalping.

It should be understood that the lawn mower 10 could have only two or more than three cutting decks in the front row, and only one or more than two cutting decks in the rear row. Also, other arrangements could be used to mount the decks on the frame 12.

Various features of the invention are set forth in the following claims.

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CLAIMS

1. A gang-type rotary lawn mower comprising
a frame supported by wheels for movement over the ground,
a power source which is mounted on the frame and which
drives at least two of the wheels,
an operator's seat mounted on the frame,
a steering system enabling the operator to steer the lawn
mower,

at least two side-by-side front rotary cutting deck
assemblies mounted on the frame, the front deck assemblies
defining a gap between adjacent front deck assemblies, and

at least one rear rotary cutting deck assembly mounted on
the frame behind the front deck assemblies, each rear deck
assembly being aligned with a respective gap between adjacent
front deck assemblies,

each of the front and rear deck assemblies including a
single-spindle cutting deck defining a downwardly opening space,
a single spindle mounted for rotation about a generally vertical
axis within the space, and at least one cutting blade mounted on
the spindle for rotation therewith.

2. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 1 wherein the front
deck assemblies are mounted on the frame in front of the front
wheels, and the rear deck assembly is mounted on the frame behind
the front wheels and in front of the rear wheels.

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3. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 1 wherein each deck assembly also includes a rear roller supporting the associated deck for movement over the ground, and wherein the deck has a width such that the roller extends across substantially the entire width of the deck.

4. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 3 wherein each of the front and rear deck assemblies includes a pair of laterally-spaced, generally vertically-extending side plates having forward ends, a first front wheel supporting one of the side plates for movement over the ground, and a second front wheel supporting the other of the side plates for movement over the ground, wherein the rear roller extends between the side plates and supports the side plates for movement over the ground, wherein the associated deck is located between the side plates and in front of the roller and is mounted on the side plates such that the height of the deck relative to the ground is adjustable.

5. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 1 wherein each deck assembly also includes a hydraulic motor which is mounted on the deck and which is drivingly connected to the spindle.

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6. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 1 wherein each deck assembly includes a set of cutting blades mounted on the spindle for rotation therewith, the set of blades including a lower, leading blade having a leading cutting edge and an upwardly angled trailing edge, and an upper, trailing blade having a leading cutting edge for cutting clippings deflected upwardly by the upwardly angled trailing edge of the leading blade, the trailing blade extending at a non-perpendicular angle relative to the leading blade so that clippings coming off the trailing edge of the leading blade are cut immediately by the trailing blade before the clippings start swirling around within the space.

7. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 1 wherein each deck assembly is connected to the frame by a cross member connected to the frame for pivotal movement about a generally vertical axis and about a generally horizontal axis extending in the forward-rearward direction, the cross member having opposite, laterally-spaced ends, one of the cross member ends being connected to one of the side plates of the associated deck assembly for pivotal movement about a generally horizontal, laterally-extending axis adjacent the forward ends of the side plates, and the other of the cross member ends being connected to the other of the side plates of the associated deck assembly for pivotal movement about the generally horizontal, laterally-extending axis.

8. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 7 wherein each of the deck assemblies is connected to the frame by a respective generally L-shaped, horizontally-extending arm having a laterally-extending inner leg with an inner end connected to the frame for pivotal movement about a generally horizontal axis extending in the forward-rearward direction, and the arm having an outer leg extending in the forward-rearward direction, the outer leg having an outer end, and wherein the cross member is mounted on the outer end of the outer leg.

9. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 8 wherein the arm is operable to lift the associated deck assembly relative to the frame.

10. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 1 wherein each deck assembly is connected to the frame by a respective lifting arm operable to lift the associated deck assembly relative to the frame, such that each of the deck assemblies is connected by its own lifting arm to the frame.

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11. A rotary lawn mower comprising
a frame supported by wheels for movement over the ground,
a power source which is mounted on the frame and which
drives at least two of the wheels,
an operator's seat mounted on the frame,
a steering system enabling the operator to steer the lawn
mower, and
a rotary cutting deck assembly including a pair of
laterally-spaced, generally vertically-extending side plates
which have forward ends and which are supported for movement over
the ground, a single-spindle cutting deck defining a downwardly
opening space, the deck being located between the side plates and
being mounted on the side plates such that the height of the deck
relative to the ground is adjustable, a single spindle mounted
for rotation about a generally vertical axis within the space,
and at least one cutting blade mounted on the spindle for
rotation therewith, the deck assembly being connected to the
frame by a cross member connected to the frame for pivotal
movement about a generally vertical axis and about a generally
horizontal axis extending in the forward-rearward direction, the
cross member having opposite, laterally-spaced ends, one of the
cross member ends being connected to one of the side plates for
pivotal movement about a generally horizontal, laterally-
extending axis adjacent the forward ends of the side plates, and
the other of the cross member ends being connected to the other

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the side plates for pivotal movement about the generally horizontal, laterally-extending axis.

12. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 11 wherein the deck assembly is connected to the frame by a generally L-shaped, horizontally-extending arm having a laterally-extending inner leg with an inner end connected to the frame for pivotal movement about a generally horizontal axis extending in the forward-rearward direction, and the arm having an outer leg extending in the forward-rearward direction, the outer leg having an outer end, and wherein the cross member is mounted on the outer end of the outer leg.

13. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 12 wherein the arm is operable to lift the deck assembly relative to the frame.

14. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 11 wherein the deck assembly also includes a hydraulic motor which is mounted on the deck and which is drivingly connected to the spindle.

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15. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 11 wherein the deck assembly includes a set of cutting blades mounted on the spindle for rotation therewith, the set of blades including a lower, leading blade having a leading cutting edge and an upwardly angled trailing edge, and an upper, trailing blade having a leading cutting edge for cutting clippings deflected upwardly by the upwardly angled trailing edge of the leading blade, the trailing blade extending at a non-perpendicular angle relative to the leading blade so that clippings coming off the trailing edge of the leading blade are cut immediately by the trailing blade before the clippings start swirling around within the space.

16. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 11 wherein the deck assembly also includes a first front wheel supporting one of the side plates for movement over the ground, a second front wheel supporting the other of the side plates for movement over the ground, and a rear roller extending between the side plates and supporting the side plates for movement over the ground, wherein the deck is located in front of the roller, and wherein the deck has a width such that the roller extends across substantially the entire width of the deck.

17. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 11 wherein the ends of the cross member have thereon respective downwardly extending arms, the arms having respective lower ends, the lower end of one of the arms being connected to one of the side plates for pivotal movement about the generally horizontal, laterally-extending axis, and the lower end of the other of the arms being connected to the other of the side plates for pivotal movement about the generally horizontal, laterally-extending axis.

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18. A gang-type rotary lawn mower comprising
a frame,
a pair of front wheels supporting the frame for movement
over the ground,
a pair of rear wheels supporting the frame for movement over
the ground,
a power source which is mounted on the frame and which
drives at least one of the pairs of wheels,
an operator's seat mounted on the frame,
a steering system enabling the operator to steer the lawn
mower,
at least two side-by-side front rotary cutting deck
assemblies mounted on the frame in front of the front wheels, the
front deck assemblies defining a gap between adjacent front deck
assemblies, and
at least one rear rotary cutting deck assembly mounted on
the frame behind the front wheels and in front of the rear
wheels, each rear deck assembly being aligned with a respective
gap between adjacent front deck assemblies,
each of the front and rear deck assemblies including a pair
of laterally-spaced, generally vertically-extending side plates
having forward ends, a first front wheel supporting one of the
side plates for movement over the ground, a second front wheel
supporting the other of the side plates for movement over the
ground, a rear roller extending between the side plates and
supporting the side plates for movement over the ground, a

single-spindle cutting deck defining a downwardly opening space, the deck being located between the side plates and in front of the roller and being mounted on the side plates such that the height of the deck relative to the ground is adjustable, the deck having a width such that the roller extends across substantially the entire width of the deck, a single spindle mounted for rotation about a generally vertical axis within the space, at least one cutting blade mounted on the spindle for rotation therewith, and

each of the deck assemblies being connected to the frame by a respective generally L-shaped, horizontally-extending lifting arm operable to lift the associated deck assembly relative to the frame, such that each of the deck assemblies is connected by its own lifting arm to the frame, each arm having a laterally-extending inner leg with an inner end connected to the frame for pivotal movement about a generally horizontal axis extending in the forward-rearward direction, and each arm having an outer leg extending in the forward-rearward direction, the outer leg having an outer end, and a cross member mounted on the outer end of the outer leg for pivotal movement about a generally vertical axis and about a generally horizontal axis extending in the forward-rearward direction, the cross member having opposite, laterally-spaced ends, one of the cross member ends being connected to one of the side plates of the associated deck assembly for pivotal movement about a generally horizontal, laterally-extending axis adjacent the forward ends of the side plates, and the other of

the cross member ends being connected to the other of the side plates of the associated deck assembly for pivotal movement about the generally horizontal, laterally-extending axis.

19. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 18 wherein each deck assembly also includes a hydraulic motor which is mounted on the deck and which is drivingly connected to the spindle.

20. A lawn mower as set forth in claim 18 wherein each deck assembly includes a set of cutting blades mounted on the spindle for rotation therewith, the set of blades including a lower, leading blade having a leading cutting edge and an upwardly angled trailing edge, and an upper, trailing blade having a leading cutting edge for cutting clippings deflected upwardly by the upwardly angled trailing edge of the leading blade, the trailing blade extending at a non-perpendicular angle relative to the leading blade so that clippings coming off the trailing edge of the leading blade are cut immediately by the trailing blade before the clippings start swirling around within the space.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A gang-type rotary lawn mower including a frame supported by wheels for movement over the ground, a power source which is mounted on the frame and which drives at least two of the wheels, an operator's seat mounted on the frame, a steering system enabling the operator to steer the lawn mower, at least two side-by-side front rotary cutting deck assemblies mounted on the frame, the front deck assemblies defining a gap between adjacent front deck assemblies, and at least one rear rotary cutting deck assembly mounted on the frame behind the front deck assemblies, each rear deck assembly being aligned with a respective gap between adjacent front deck assemblies, each of the front and rear deck assemblies including a single-spindle mulching deck defining a downwardly opening space, a single spindle mounted for rotation about a generally vertical axis within the space, and at least one cutting blade mounted on the spindle for rotation therewith.

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Declaration and Power of Attorney For Patent Application

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled "GANG-TYPE ROTARY LAWN MOWER" (Attorney Docket No. 78209/9009), the specification of which is attached hereto.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56.

And I hereby appoint JOSEPH A. GEMIGNANI, (Reg. No. 19,482); ROBERT E. CLEMENCY (Reg. No. 19,287), DAVID B. SMITH (Reg. No. 27,595), GLENN A. BUSE (Reg. No. 24,217), FRED WIVIOTT (Reg. No. 19,158), DAVID R. PRICE (Reg. No. 31,557), ROBERT S. BEISER (Reg. No. 28,687), BAYARD H. MICHAEL (Reg. No. 15,974), CASIMIR F. LASKA (Reg. No. 30,862), KENT S. BARTA (Reg. No. 29,042), DAVID L. DE BRUIN (Reg. No. 35,489), TIMOTHY M. KELLEY (Reg. No. 34,201), ELIZABETH HUNT SCHOETTLY (Reg. No. 36,922), BILLIE JEAN STRANDT (Reg. No. 36,940), THOMAS A. MILLER (Reg. No. 36,871), KEVIN P. MORAN (Reg. No. 37,193) and WITOLD A. ZIARNO (Reg. No. 39,888), 100 East Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202-4108, telephone (414) 271-6560, and each or any of them, my attorneys or agents, with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS IN OR PERTAINING TO THIS APPLICATION TO:

David R. Price
MICHAEL, BEST & FRIEDRICH
100 East Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53202-4108

000110-21151520

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full name of sole inventor: Richard D. Bednar

Inventor's signature Richard D. Bednar

1-31-97
Date

Residence:

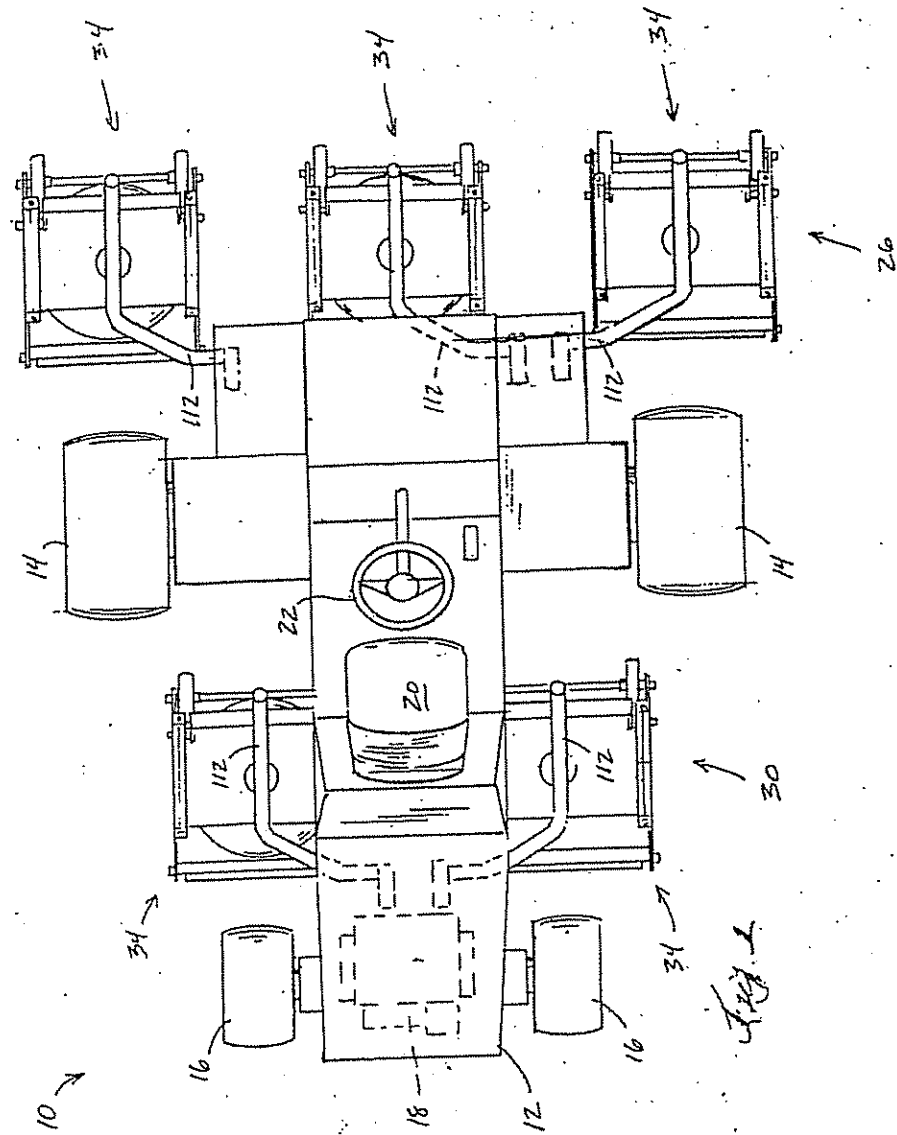
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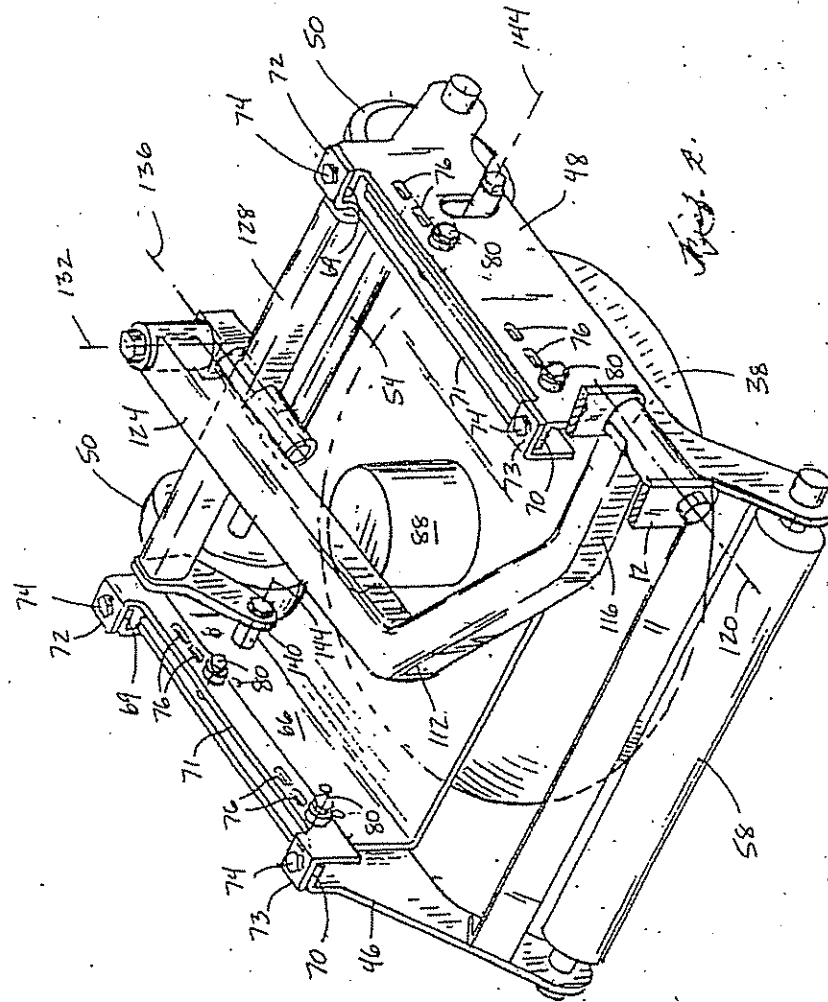
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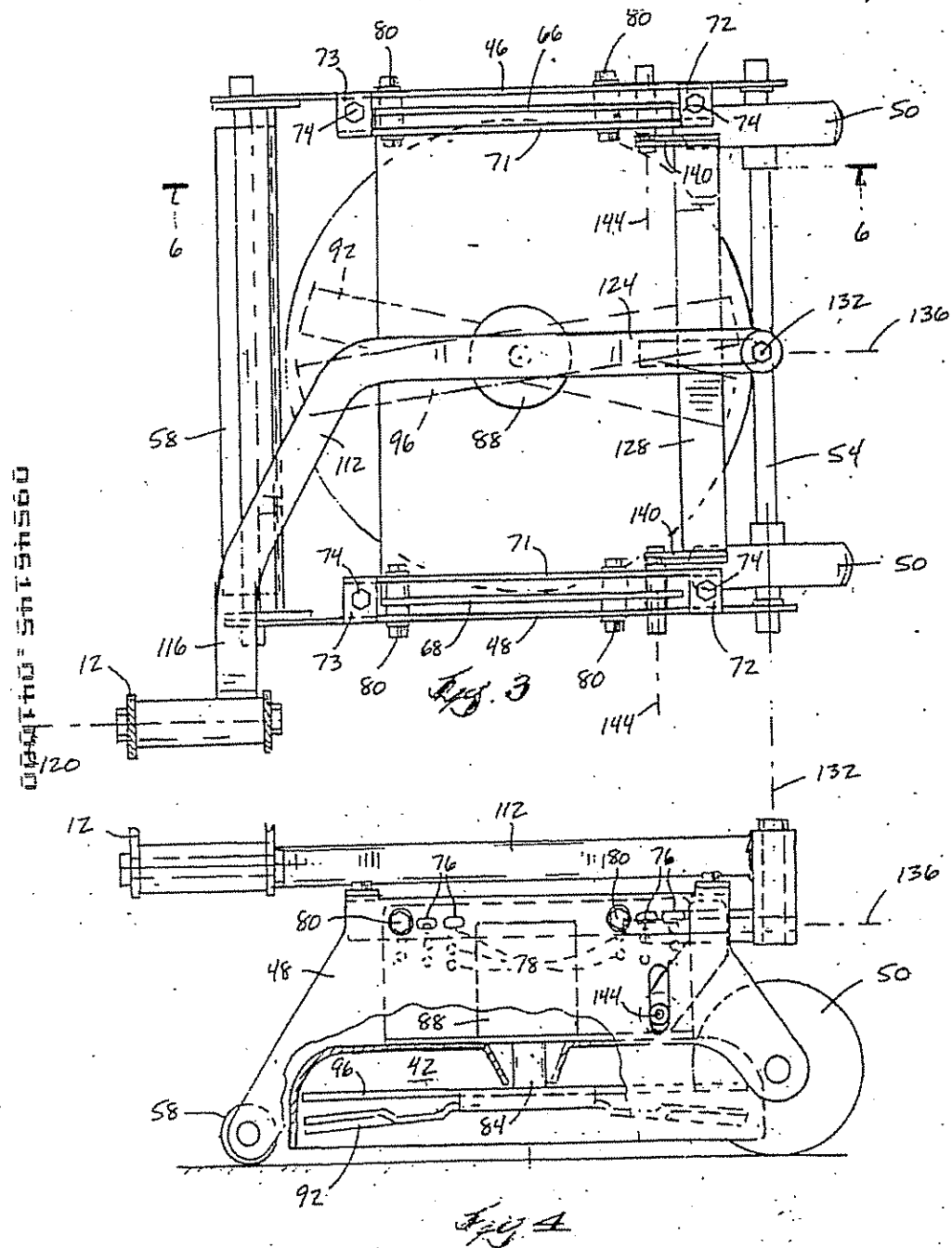
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FIG. 10 - SIDE ELEVATION

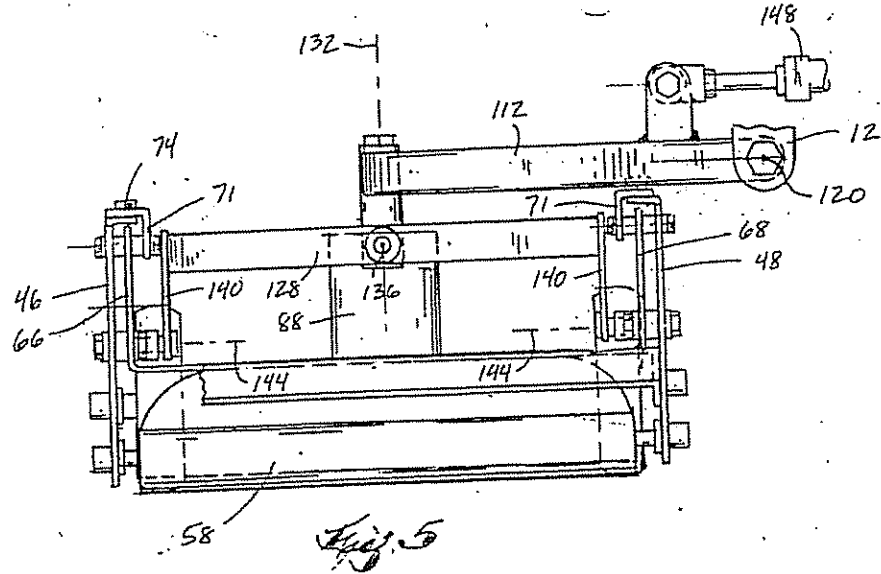


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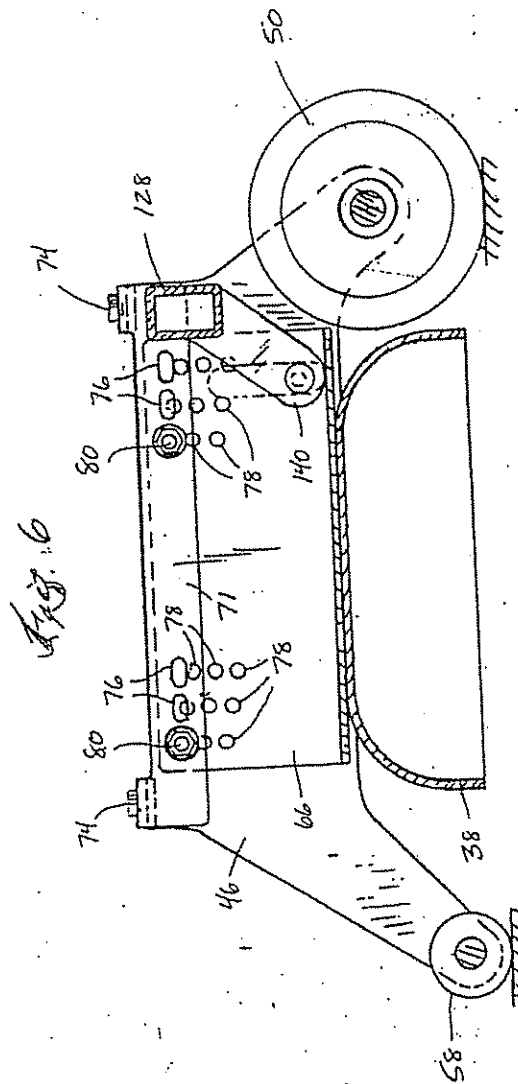


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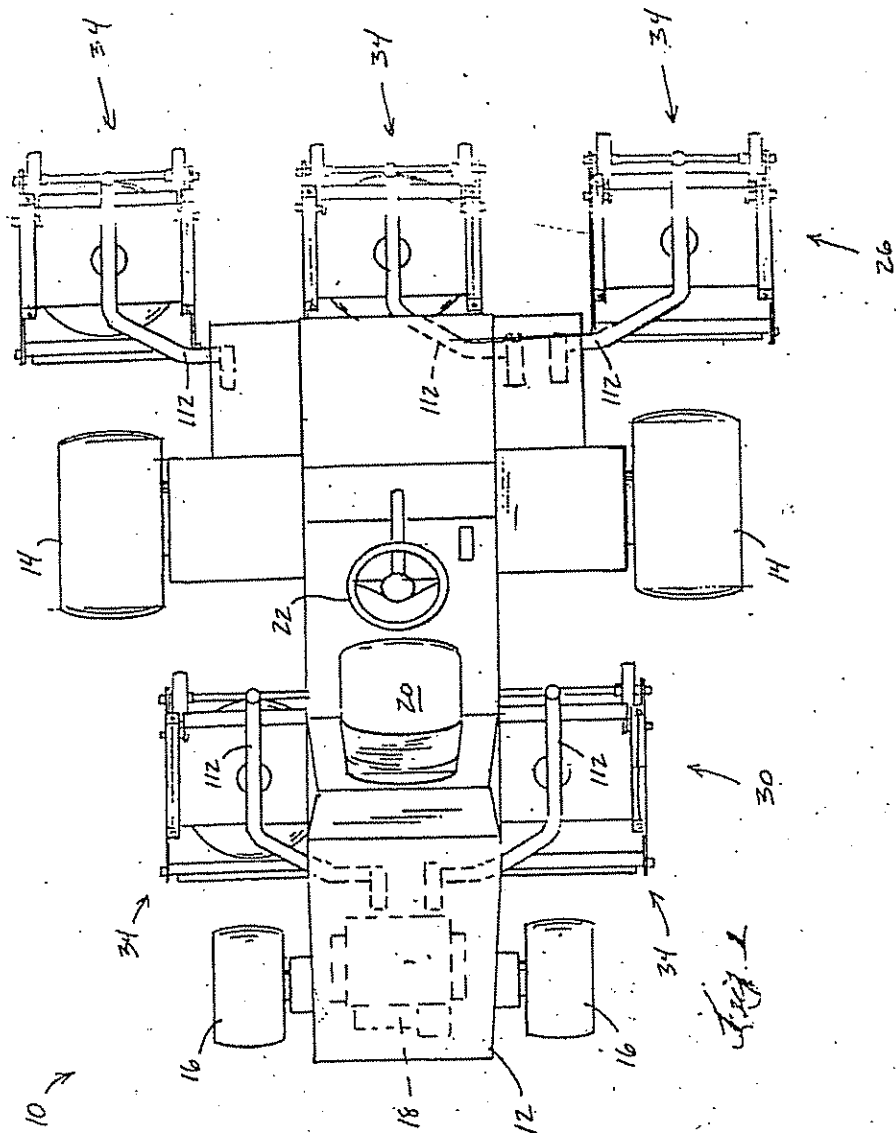
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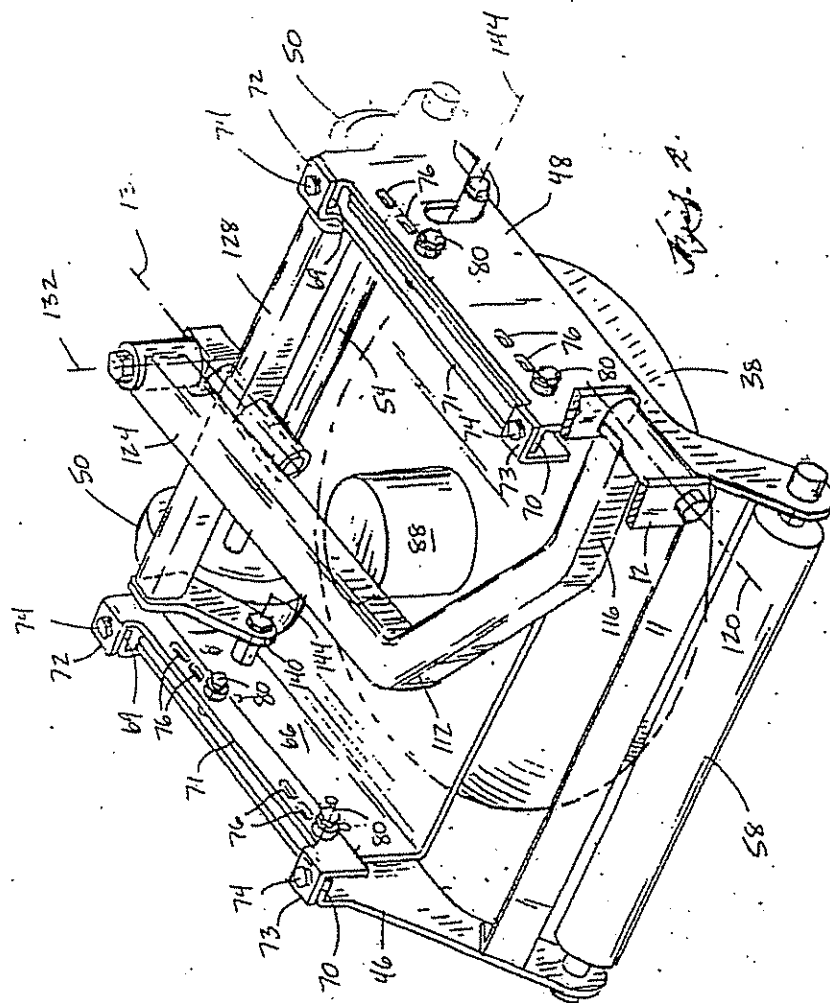
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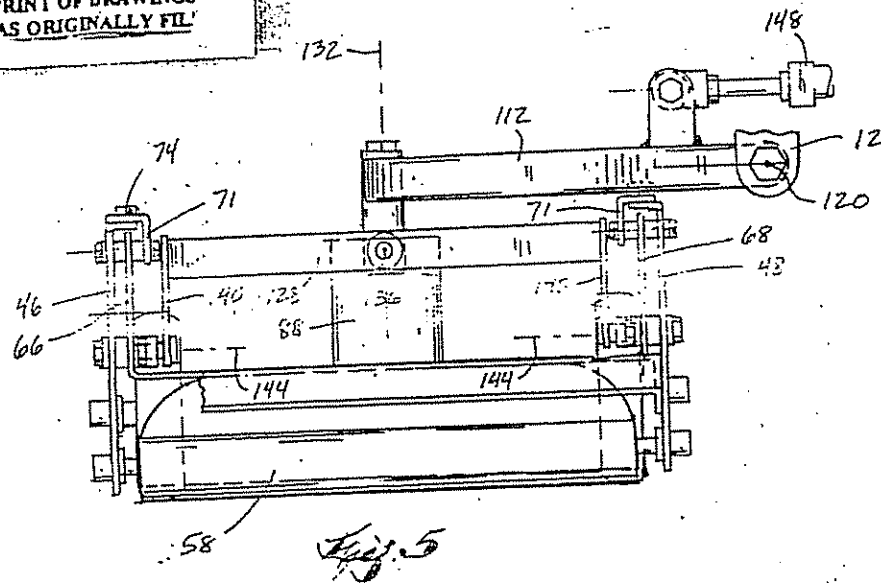


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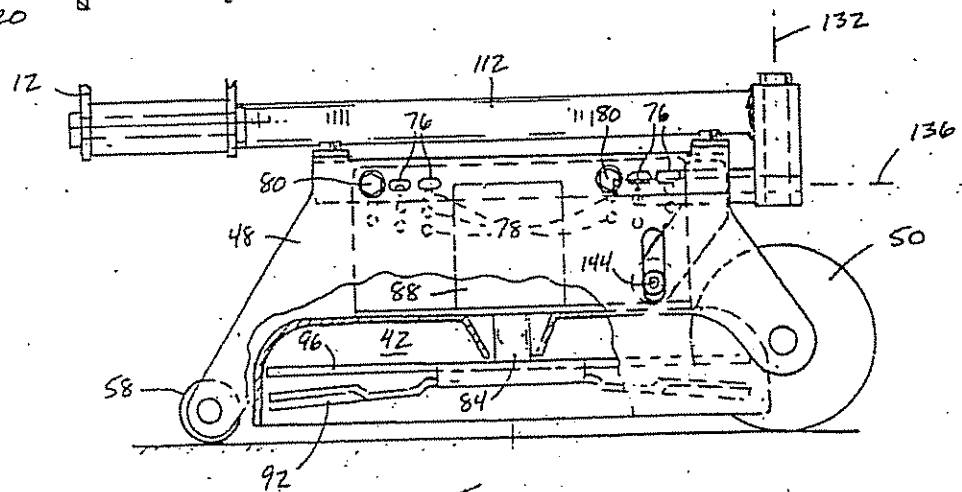
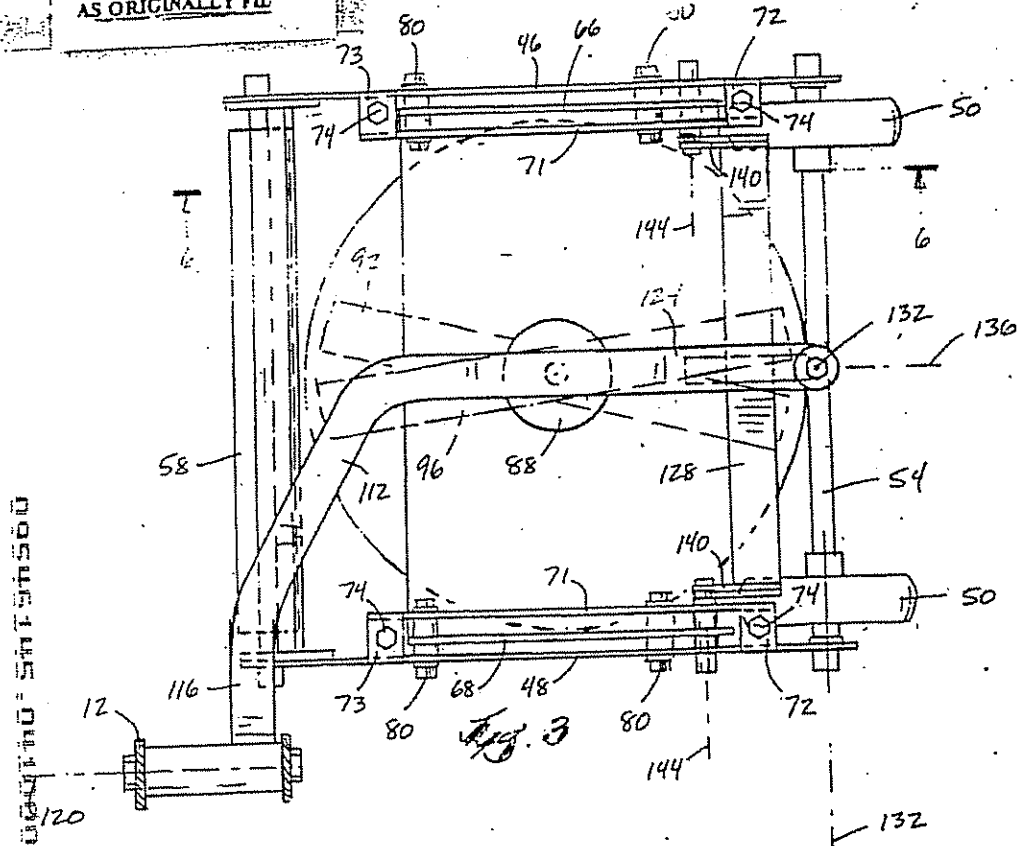
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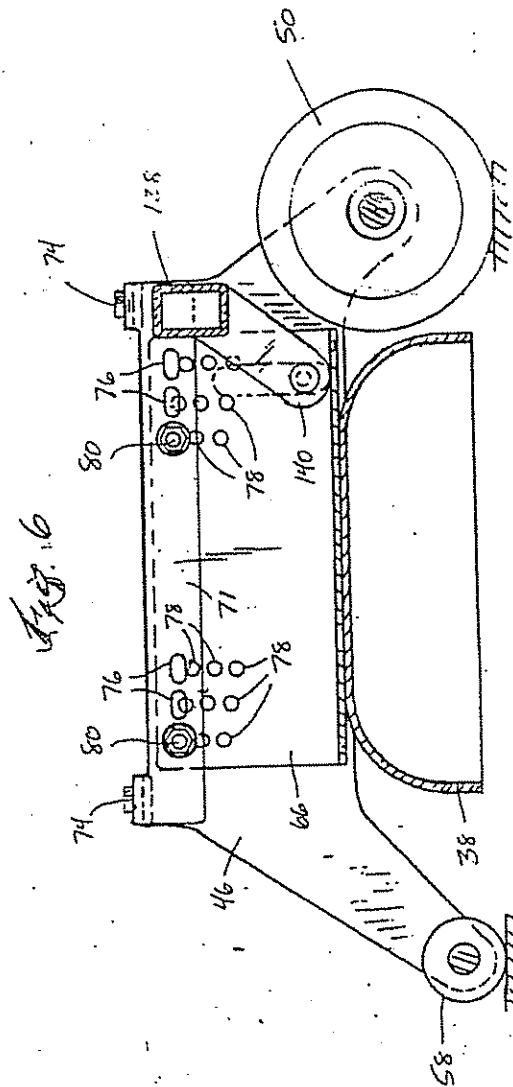
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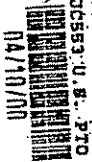
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FIG. 16



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NEW, CONTINUATION, DIVISIONAL OR
CONTINUATION-IN-PART APPLICATION
UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.53(b)

Attorney Docket No. 7016R-000015/GOA

Express Mail Label No. EJ948538840US

Date April 10, 2000

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Hon. Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D. C. 20231

Sir:

Transmitted herewith for filing under 37 C.F.R. §1.53(b) is a patent application for

GANG-TYPE ROTARY LAWN MOWER

Identified by: ☐ First named inventor
or ☒ Attorney Docket No. (see above)

1. Type of Application

- ☐ This application is a new (non-continuing) application.
☒ This application is a ☒ continuation / ☐ divisional / ☐ continuation-in-part of prior application
 No. 08/794,141. Amend the specification by inserting before the first line the sentence:

—This is a continuation of United States patent application No. 08/794,141,
 filed February 3, 1997, *now U.S. Patent 6,013,532*—

- ☒ The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration
 is supplied, is considered part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is
 hereby incorporated by reference therein.

If for some reason applicant has not requested a sufficient extension of time in the parent
 application, and/or has not paid a sufficient fee for any necessary response in the parent
 application and/or for the extension of time necessary to prevent the abandonment of the parent
 application prior to the filing of this application, please consider this as a Request for an Extension
 for the required time period and/or authorization to charge our Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for
 any fee that may be due. THIS FORM IS BEING FILED IN TRIPLICATE: one copy for this
 application; one copy for use in connection with the Deposit Account (if applicable); and one copy
 for the above-mentioned parent application (if any extension of time is necessary).

2. Contents of Application

- a. Specification of 21 pages;
☐ A microfiche computer program (Appendix);
☐ A nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence submission;
☐ Because the enclosed application is in a non-English language, a verified English
 translation ☐ is enclosed ☐ will be filed.
☒ Cancel original claims 2-20 of the prior application before calculating the filing fee. (At
 least one original independent claim must be retained for filing date purposes.)
 b. ☒ Drawings on 5 sheets;

JA - 0230

Attorney Docket No. 7016R-000109

Express Mail Label No. EJ 948538840US

Date April 10, 2000

- c. ☒ A signed Oath/Declaration ☒ is enclosed / ☐ will be filed in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.53(f).

The enclosed Oath/Declaration is ☐ newly executed / ☒ a copy from a prior application under 37 C.F.R. §1.63(d) / ☐ accompanied by a statement requesting the deletion of person(s) not inventors in the continuing application.

d. Fees

FILING FEE	Number Filed	Number Extra	Rate	Basic Fee
CALCULATION				\$690.00
Total Claims	1 - 20 =	0 x	\$18.00 =	\$0.00
Independent Claims	1 - 3 =	0 x	\$78.00 =	\$0.00
Multiple Dependent Claim(s) Used			\$260.00 =	
FILING FEE - NON-SMALL ENTITY				\$690.00
FILING FEE - SMALL ENTITY: Reduction by 1/2				
<input type="checkbox"/> Verified Statement under 37 C.F.R. §1.27 is enclosed.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Verified Statement filed in prior application.				
Assignment Recordal Fee (\$40.00)				
37 C.F.R. §1.17(k) Fee (non-English application)				
TOTAL				\$690.00

- ☒ A check is enclosed to cover the calculated fees. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 08-0750. A duplicate copy of this document is enclosed.

- ☐ The calculated fees will be paid within the time allotted for completion of the filing requirements.

- ☐ The calculated fees are to be charged to Deposit Account No. 08-0750. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to said Deposit Account. A duplicate copy of this document is enclosed.

3. Priority Information

- ☐ Foreign Priority: Priority based on _____ Application No. _____, filed _____, is claimed.

- ☐ A copy of the above referenced priority document ☐ is enclosed / ☐ will be filed in due course, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §119(a)-(d).

- ☐ Provisional Application Priority: Priority based on United States Provisional Application No. _____, filed _____, is claimed under 35 U.S.C. §119(e).

Attorney Docket No. 7016R-000109
Express Mail Label No. EJ948538840US
Date April 10, 2000

4. Other Submissions

- ☐ A Preliminary Amendment is enclosed.
- ☐ An Information Disclosure Statement, _____ sheets of PTO Form 1449, and _____ patent(s)/publications/documents are enclosed.
- ☐ A power of attorney
- ☐ is submitted ☐ with the new Oath/Declaration.
- ☐ is of record in the prior application and ☐ is in the original papers / ☐ a copy is enclosed.
- ☒ An Assignment of the invention
- ☐ is enclosed with a cover sheet pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§3.11, 3.28 and 3.31.
- ☒ is of record in a prior application. The assignment is to Ransomes America Corporation, and is recorded at Reel _____, Frame(s) _____.
- ☐ An Establishment of Assignee's Right To Prosecute Application Under 37 C.F.R. §3.73(b), and Power Of Attorney is enclosed.
- ☒ An Express Mailing Certificate is enclosed.
- ☒ Other: Return Postcard; a Preliminary Amendment will follow.

Attention is directed to the fact that the correspondence address for this application is:

Harness, Dickey & Pierce, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600.

Respectfully,

David P. Utykowski

David P. Utykowski
Reg. No. 39,052

Date 4/10/00
Harness, Dickey & Pierce, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600



GP 3671
PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Group Art Unit:	To Be Assigned
Examiner:	To Be Assigned
Serial No.:	09/546,145
Inventor(s):	Richard D. Bednar
Filed:	April 10, 2000
For:	Gang-Type Rotary Lawn Mower
Attorney Docket:	7016R-000015/COA

INFORMATION
DISCLOSURE
STATEMENT

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Hon. Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to:
Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231 on
7/17/00

By

David P. O'Neil

Sir,

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.97 and 1.98, Applicant(s) hereby submit(s) an Information Disclosure Statement for consideration by the Examiner.

I. LIST OF PATENTS, PUBLICATIONS OR OTHER INFORMATION

The patents, publications or other information submitted for consideration by the Office (except U.S. patent applications) are listed on PTO-1449, attached hereto.

JA - 0233

II. COPIES

- a. _____ Submitted herewith is a legible copy of (i) each U.S. and foreign patent; (ii) each publication or that portion which caused it to be listed; and (iii) all other information or that portion which caused it to be listed, except that no copy of a U.S. patent application is included.
- b. _____ Any patents, publications or other information which are listed on PTO-1449 or on the copies of PTO-892 but which are not enclosed herewith were previously cited by or submitted to the PTO in one of the following applications which has been relied upon for an earlier filing date under 35 U.S.C. 120:

U.S. Serial NumberU.S. Filing DateIII. CONCISE EXPLANATION OF THE RELEVANCE (check at least one box)

- a. X Except as may be indicated below in (b), all of the patents, publications or other information are in the English language (concise explanation not required).
- b. X A concise explanation of the relevance of all patents, publications or other information listed that is not in the English language is as follows: See English language abstract attached to the references as necessary.
- c. _____ The following additional information is provided for the Examiner's consideration.

IV. CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S)

The Examiner is advised that the following co-pending application(s) contain(s) subject matter that may be related to the present application. By bringing this(these) applications to the Examiner's attention, Applicant(s) does(do) not waive the confidentiality provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 122.

Serial No.Filing DateArt UnitV. THIS IDS IS BEING FILED UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.97(b): (check one box)

- a. _____ within three months of the filing date of a national application (37 C.F.R. 1.97(b)(1)). No fee or certification is required.
- b. _____ within three months of the date of entry of the national stage as set forth in § 1.491 in an international application (37 C.F.R. 1.97(b)(2)). No fee or certification is required.

- c. X before the mailing date of a first Action on the merits (37 C.F.R. 1.97(b)(3)). No fee or certification is required. In the event that a first Office Action on the merits has been issued, please consider this IDS under 37 C.F.R. 1.97(c) and see the certification under 37 C.F.R. 1.97(e) below, or, if no certification has been made, charge our deposit account a fee in the amount of \$240.00 as required by 37 C.F.R. 1.17(p).

VI. THIS IDS IS BEING FILED UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.97(c): (check one box)

before the mailing date of a Final Office Action under 37 C.F.R. 1.113 (See 37 C.F.R. 1.97(c)(1)) or before the mailing date of a Notice of Allowance under 37 C.F.R. 1.311 (See 37 C.F.R. 1.97(c)(2)).

- a. No certification; therefore, a fee in the amount of \$240.00 is required by 37 C.F.R. 1.17(p).
- b. See the certification below. No fee is required.

VII. CERTIFICATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.97(e) (check only one box)

The undersigned hereby certifies that

- a. each item of information contained in the IDS was cited in a communication from a foreign or PCT Patent Office in a counterpart foreign or PCT application not more than three months prior to the filing of this IDS; or
- b. no item of information contained in the IDS was cited in a communication from a foreign Patent Office in a counterpart foreign application or, to the best of my knowledge after making reasonable inquiry, was known to any individual designated in 37 C.F.R. 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of this statement.
- c. Some of the items of information were cited in a communication from a foreign Patent Office. As to this information, the undersigned certified that each item of information contained in the IDS was cited in a communication from a foreign Patent Office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of this IDS. As to the remaining information, the undersigned hereby certifies that no item of this remaining information contained in the IDS was cited in a communication from a foreign Patent Office in a counterpart foreign application or, to the best of my knowledge after making reasonable inquiry, was known to any individual designated in 37 C.F.R. 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of this statement.

VIII. PAYMENT OF FEES (check one box)

_____ A check in the amount of \$240.00 is enclosed for the above-identified fee.

_____ Please charge Deposit Account No. 08-0750 in the amount of \$240.00 for the above-indicated fee. A triplicate copy of this paper is attached.

It is Applicant's opinion that the claims presently on file patentably distinguish the present invention from each of these references. The above references are being cited only in the interests of candor and without any admission that they constitute statutory prior art or contain matter which anticipates the invention or which would render the same obvious, either singly or in combination, to a person of ordinary skill in the art.

If the Examiner has any questions concerning this IDS, he/she is requested to contact the undersigned. If it is determined that this IDS has been filed under the wrong rule, the PTO is requested to consider this IDS under the proper rule (with a petition if necessary) and charge the appropriate fee to Deposit Account No. 08-0750.

Please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.16 or 1.17 to Deposit Account No. 08-0750.

Respectfully submitted,
HARNES, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.

Date: 7/19/02

By: David P. Utykanski
David P. Utykanski
Reg. No. 39,052

Enclosures: ☒ PTO-1449
☐ PTO-892
☒ References
☐ Foreign Search Report
☐ Fee
☐ Other:

HARNES, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248)641-1600

FORM HDP-1449 (Based on Form PTQ-1449) PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE INFORMATION DISCLOSURE CITATION (Use several sheets if necessary) Sheet 1 of 2	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. 7D16R-000015/COA	SERIAL NO. 09/848,145
	APPLICANT: RICHARD D. BEDNAR	
	FILING DATE: APRIL 10, 2000	GROUP: To Be Designated 367

DISPATENT DOCUMENTS						
Ref. Desig.	Examiner's Initials	Document Number	Date	Name	Class/ Subclass	(If appropriate) Filing Date
1.	<u>2</u>	1,981,710	June 1934	Pol	—	—
2.		2,504,259	April 1950	Ford	—	—
3.		2,936,561	May, 1960	Grimes	—	—
4.		3,070,938	Jan. 1963	Winget	—	—
5.		3,118,288	Jan. 1964	Colburn	—	—
6.		3,135,079	June 1964	Dunn	—	—
7.		4,308,713	Jan. 1982	James	—	—
8.		4,901,507	Feb. 1990	Cracraft	—	—
9.		5,137,100	Aug. 1992	Scott et al.	—	—
10.		5,280,695	Jan. 1994	Nunes, Jr., et al.	—	—
11.		5,293,729	March 1994	Curry et al.	—	—
12.		5,297,378	March 1994	Smith	—	—
13.		5,343,680	Sept. 1994	Reichen et al.	—	—
14.		5,355,665	Oct. 1994	Peter	—	—
15.		5,412,932	May 1995	Schueler	—	—
16.		5,423,565	June 1995	Smith	—	—
17.		5,481,857	Jan. 1996	Umemoto et al.	—	—
18.		5,497,604	March 1998	Lonn	—	—
19.	<u>2</u>	6,047,530	April 2000	Bednar	—	—

Examiner: Perzoto10/17/00

Date Considered:

EXAMINER: Please initial if citation considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

JA - 0237



FORM HDP-1449 (Based on Form 1001)

**PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
INFORMATION DISCLOSURE CITATION**
(Use several sheets if necessary)

Sheet 2 of 2

ATTORNEY DOCKET No.
7016R-000015/COA

SERIAL No. 09/548,145

APPLICANT: RICHARD D. BEDNAR

FILING DATE: APRIL 10, 2000

GROUP: TO BE DESIGNATED
3671

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS							
Serial Design	Examiner's Initials	Document Number	Date	Country	Class/ Subclass	Yes	No
1.	<i>CB</i>	7,804,519	Aug. 1978	NL	—		
2.	<i>CB</i>	88/05998	Aug. 1988	WO	—		
3.	<i>CB</i>	0,342,700	Nov. 1989	EP	—		

OTHER DOCUMENTS (including Author, Title, Date, Filing Date, etc.)		
Serial Design	Examiner's Initials	
1.	<i>CB</i>	Mountfield "Domestic Grass Machinery" (Date unknown).
2.	<i>CB</i>	Turf Blazer 1040 Diesel, Howard Price Turf Equipment (advertising brochure) (Date unknown).
3.	<i>CB</i>	Nunes Rotary Mower, John Deere 3364 Deck Attachment, Nunes Manufacturing, Inc. <u>6/1/73</u>

Examiner: *Perkins* 11/17/00 Date Considered: 11/17/00

EXAMINER: Please initial if citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

JA - 0238

GRASSMACHINERY

EXCELLENCE

O.D. Mountfield, in Maidenhead, is the Group's domestic grasscutting arm whose core business is selling rotary mowers for home use through retail dealers, chain stores and garden centres.

As leaders in the home market, with a worldwide reputation for high quality machines, Mountfield have taken major steps to maintain that reputation and remain profitable in the face of fierce competition in today's markets.

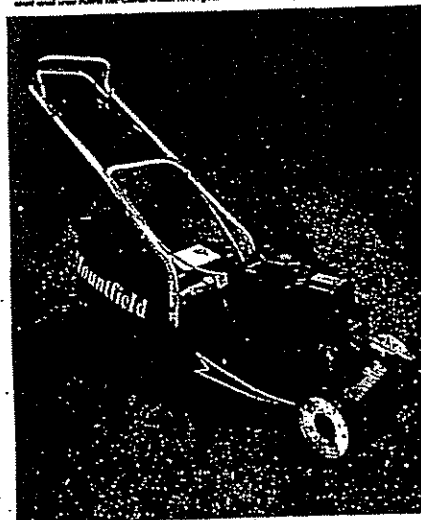
To maximise cost-effectiveness without compromising their standards, Mountfield tackled areas like inventory and space problems head-on. Key factors in their success have been two guiding principles, "Just in Time" and "Total Quality Creation".

"Just in Time" means that inventory stocks are timed to arrive just before they are actually needed in the sales process. This reduces the cost involved for excessive storage, and keeps the inventory previously committed, in stock of supplies and parts.

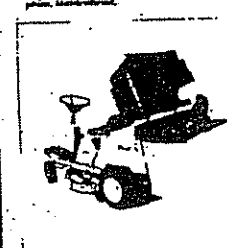
"Total Quality Creation" means creating quality at source; a system where everybody takes personal responsibility for the work. With little new equipment, work-in-progress has been almost completely eliminated. There has been a massive 75% reduction in change-over times, and Mountfield can produce 25% more mowers in the same factory area while reducing total stocks by almost 20%.

New production facilities in France and Italy have also made sure that at Mountfield we can continue to keep pace with growing European demand for our products.

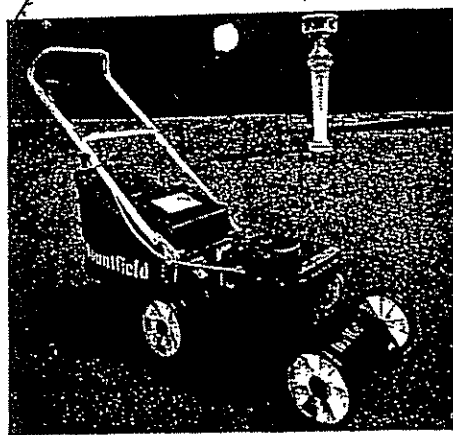
Mountfield's new selling Express 18" mower is now a truly independent Group machine manufactured for 10 years. The self-propelled 18.5hp model comes with electric start and was named the Grass Machinery Association's "best grass cutting machine".



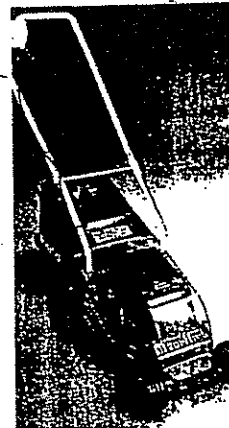
Mountfield's new selling Express 18" mower is now a truly independent Group machine manufactured for 10 years. The self-propelled 18.5hp model comes with electric start and was named the Grass Machinery Association's "best grass cutting machine".



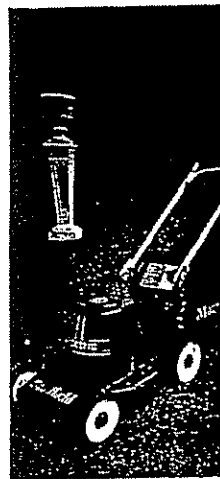
The new 18.5hp rotary mower manufactured by Mountfield is now a truly independent Group machine manufactured for 10 years. The self-propelled 18.5hp model comes with electric start and was named the Grass Machinery Association's "best grass cutting machine".



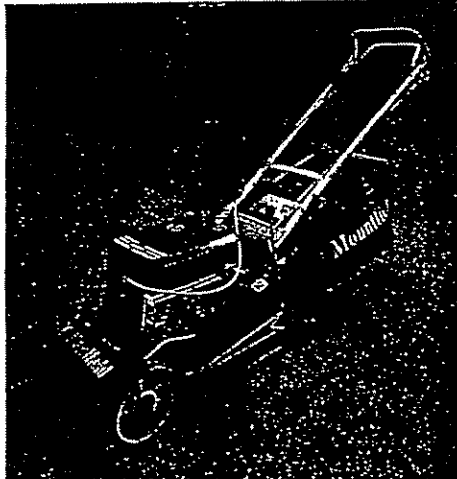
• The Briggs 2.877. A hand-propelled four wheeled model with 1/2" axle.



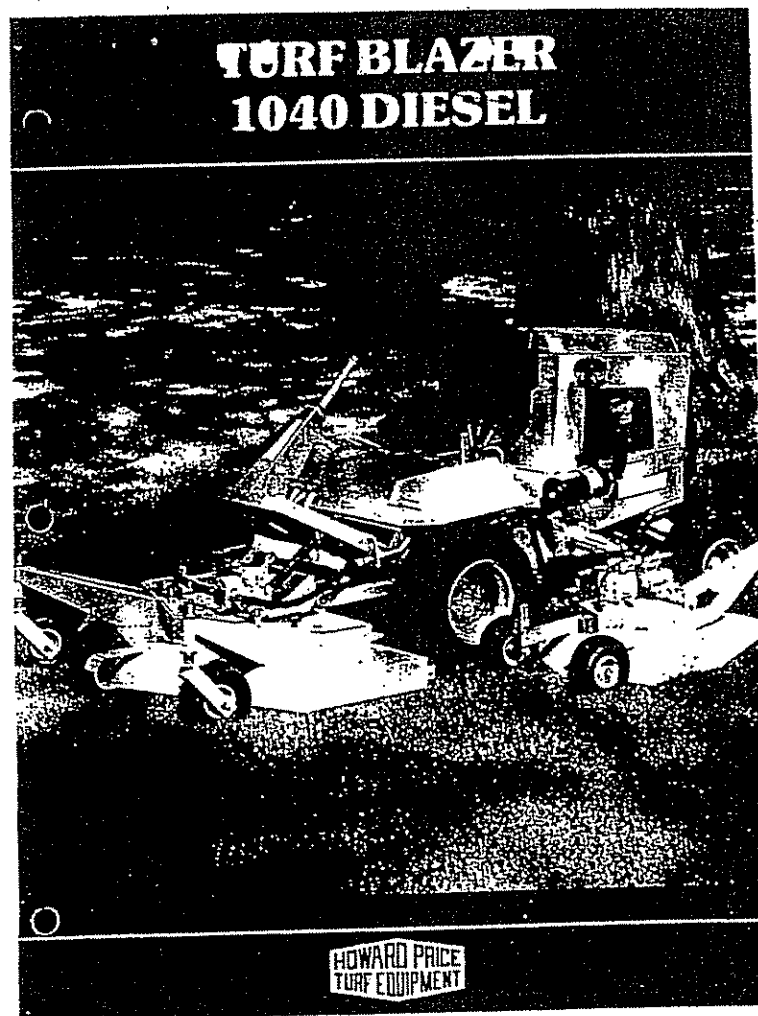
• The new Pilsener 1/2" motor.



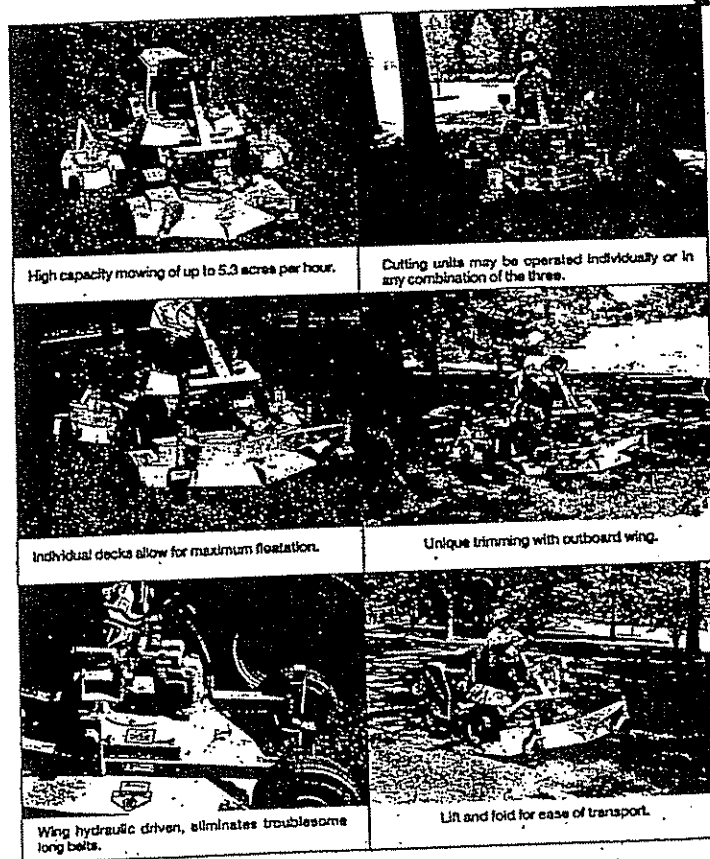
• The electric model in the new range of Kinsmen. 1/2" axle and motor. May with polished brass and silver paint.



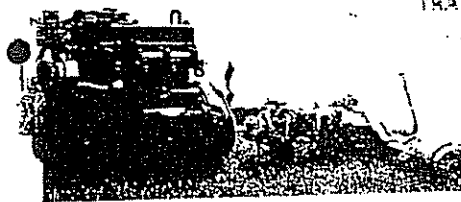
• The Montfield Express in new motor.



THE PRODUCTION MACHINE "HIGH CAPACITY, ECONOMICAL, HIGH-FLOATATION"



POWERED BY YANMAR

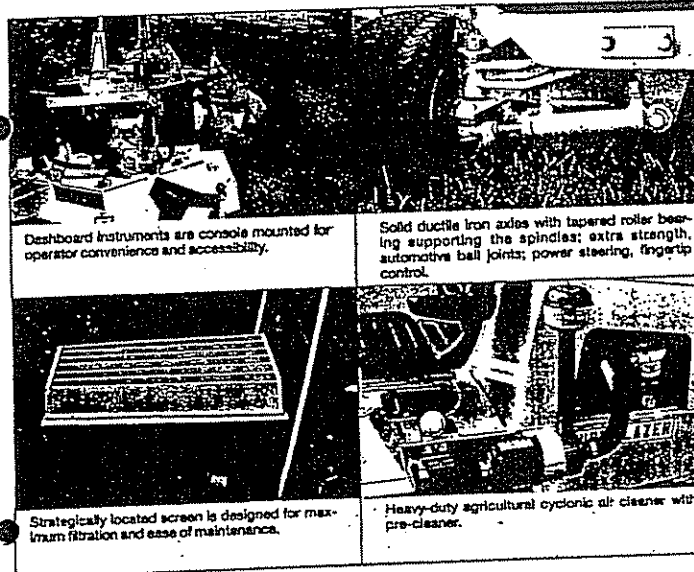


Yanmar 4-cylinder diesel, water cooled 47 hp @ 3600 RPM governed down to 40 hp @ 3000 RPM for exceptional diesel digging power when the going gets tough. This computer designed diesel is very fuel efficient and will perform countless hours of dependable service.

TRACTION BY DANA AND DANA

The heavy-duty hydrostatic transmission coupled to a Dana GT-20 axle converts engine horsepower directly into traction without clutches or the shifting of gears. Response to operator control of speed and direction is both smooth and positive, providing infinitely variable speed from 0 to 10 mph.

A triple B section, powerband belt transmits power simply and efficiently for PTO drive system requirements.

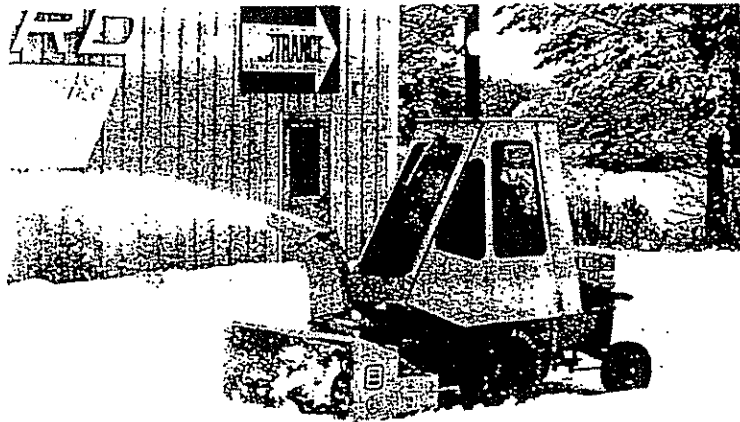


Dashboard instruments are console mounted for operator convenience and accessibility.

Solid ductile iron axles with tapered roller bearing supporting the spindles; extra strength, automotive ball joints; power steering, fingertip control.

Strategically located screen is designed for maximum filtration and ease of maintenance.

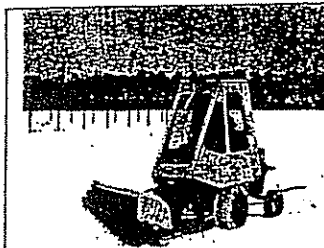
Heavy-duty agricultural cyclonic air cleaner with pre-cleaner.



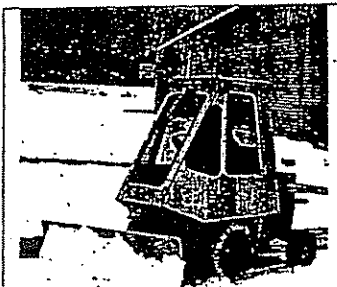
YEAR-ROUND PERFORMANCE

When the snow moves in, the 1040 moves it out with a two-stage, 60" snow blower. Electric chute rotator enables the operator to deposit snow in any desired area with only the touch of a switch.

The steel and safety glass cab, mounted on the R.O.P.S. framework, commands a 360° view. Cab panels are demountable for use of R.O.P.S. for summer mowing season. The hot-water heater and defroster insure comfort and visibility to the operator.



The 60" broom is ideal for sweeping light snow or cleaning debris off sidewalks. Available as 30° set angle on the brush head to the right or optional manual adjustment to either side.



If you prefer plowing snow, our 60", heavy-duty plow is ideal. Available with manual angling or optional hydraulic angling. Hydraulic angling is a valuable time-saving tool when working in tight conditions.

SPECIFICATIONS

TURF BLAZER 1040

ENGINE	Yanmar 4-cylinder diesel, water-cooled 47 HP @ 3600 RPM governed down to 40 at 3000 RPM. 83.11 CID, 16.08 compression ratio. Full pressure trochoid oil pump, 6 quart capacity with spin-on filter. High efficiency/low consumption swirl type pre-combustion chamber, cast iron cylinder head, block and oil pan. Double fuel filter and Racor water separator. Fast response centrifugal type governor. Thermostat system for cold weather starting, heavy duty agricultural cyclonic air cleaner with pre-cleaner.
HYDRAULIC PTO DRIVE	8 1/2 gallon, tractor mounted reservoir, High capacity oil cooler.
FUEL CAPACITY	9 gallons
TRACTION DRIVE	Sunstrand model 15, inline transmission with acceleration control valve mounted on Dana GT-20 transaxle.
WHEELS/TIRES	Front traction tires, high- flotation: 23-10.50 x 12, 4-ply rating. Rear steering tires, high flotation: 18-8.50 x 8, 4-ply rating. Both front and rear tires mounted on demountable drop center rims.
CHASSIS	Heavy formed and welded steel unitized frame with structural tubing reinforcement.
BRAKES	Dual 7" drum type brakes, independently operable for steering assist, single pedal for service and parking; dynamic braking through traction drive.
STEERING	TRW HGF power steering assembly with 15" wheel. Rear steering axle, heavy-duty, solid ductile iron. Steering spindles are supported with tapered roller bearings.
OPERATOR'S CONSOLE	Throttle, PTO and hydraulic lift levers, key-operated ignition switch, rocker type switches for lights, accessory and cold start, hourmeter, engine water temperature and fuel gauges, oil pressure and electrical discharge warning lights, 12V heavy-duty battery.
PTO DRIVE	High torque, triple B section band belt drive system, automatic fast response braking on disengagement, telescoping U-joint type drive shaft to attachment.
CERTIFICATION	This product conforms to ANSI specifications B71.4 1990.

104" ROTARY MOWER ATTACHMENT

WIDTH OF CUT	104"
CUTTING CAPACITY	Up to 5.3 acres per hour.
CENTER MOWER	60" rear discharge, 1 1/2" to 5 1/4" cutting height; Three (3) 3/4" x 2 1/2" x 20 1/2" heavy-duty, heat treated blades on 1 1/4" blade shafts. 11 gauge formed steel blade housing; Formed and welded 3/4" steel spindle support frame for maximum rigidity; Vee-belt shock absorbing type drive to all spindles from PTO driven gearbox. Deck has spring counter balanced suspension system for maximum drive traction; Two (2) front mounted 4.10-3.50 x 4, 2-ply pneumatic swivel caster wheels with full roller bearing suspension; Single 2 1/2" x 4" stroke cylinder for hydraulic power lift. Front deck can be operated with wings folded.
WING MOWERS	24" cut with rear discharge; 1 1/2" to 5 1/4" cutting height; Deck frame constructed of 1 1/2" x 2" x 11 gauge steel tubing, mounted to 3/4" blade hub channel; Deck pan constructed of 11 gauge formed steel.
WING DRIVE	Hydraulic drive by gearbox mounted hydraulic pump; Pump capacity of 11 GPM @ 2500 PSI, 1.16 CID; Replaceable internal wear plate.
DECK MOTOR	Gear type; 1.02 CID with internal wear plate and case drain.
DECK WHEEL	Two (2) front mounted wheels; 4.10-3.50 x 4" wide, 2-ply pneumatic casters and 10 1/4" x 3 1/4" semi-pneumatic caster wheels on rear.

ACCESSORIES

SNOW BLOWER

TYPE Two-stage, 60" with 14" diameter auger and an 18" blower fan. Electric chute rotator standard.
 WEIGHT 525 lbs.

SNOW PLOW

TYPE 60", heavy-duty rolled steel blade. High carbon hardened steel edge, spring loaded blade. Optional hydraulic angling kit available.
 WEIGHT 150 lbs.

BROOM

TYPE 60" brushhead by 24" diameter. Fixed angle 30° to right. Optional manual angling 30° to either side. Overall dimensions and weight approximate.
 WEIGHT 300 lbs.

ROLL OVER PROTECTION SYSTEM (R.O.P.S.)

TYPE 1½" x 2" x ¼" wall, structural steel tubing, 14 gauge sun roof. Seal bolts standard. Meets OSHA 1928.52 and SAE J1194 standards. Vehicle height with R.O.P.S. 78".
 WEIGHT 95 lbs.

CAB

TYPE Formed 14 gauge panels mount to R.O.P.S. frame. Safety glass in all windows. Windshield wiper standard.

	OVERALL DIMENSIONS	
	WINGS FOLDED	WINGS UNFOLDED
HEIGHT	52"	52"
WIDTH	80"	105½"
LENGTH W/TRACTOR	114"	114"
WEIGHT	610#	610#
WEIGHT W/TRACTOR	2024	2024

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ART UNIT
EXAMINER
INVENTOR(S)
SERIAL NUMBER
FILED
FOR

3671
To be assigned
Richard D. Bednar
09/548,145
April 10, 2000
GANG-TYPE ROTARY LAWN MOWER

Attorney Docket No. 7016R000015/COA

RESPONSE TRANSMITTAL AND
EXTENSION OF TIME REQUEST
(IF REQUIRED)

RECEIVED
AUG - 2 2000
TC 3600 MAIL ROOM

THE COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D. C. 20231

Sir:

FEE CALCULATION FOR ENCLOSED RESPONSE and EXTENSION REQUEST (If any)					
	Claims Remaining	Highest No. Previously Paid	Number Extra	Rate	Additional Fee
Total Claims	12	20	0	\$18.00	=
Independent Claims	3	3		\$78.00	=
Surcharge For Multiple Dependent Claim First Added				\$260.00	=
<input type="checkbox"/> Applicant requests a _____ month extension of time for response to the outstanding Office Action. The large entity fee is					
TOTAL					
<input type="checkbox"/> SMALL ENTITY STATUS (If applicable, divide TOTAL by 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Verified Statement enclosed, If not previously filed.					
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduction for Extension Fee of _____ months already paid					
<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:					
TOTAL					

- ☐ A check is enclosed to cover the fees as calculated above.
- ☐ The fees calculated above are to be charged to Deposit Account No. 08-0750.

If for some reason applicant has not requested a sufficient extension of time and/or has not paid a sufficient fee for this response and/or for the extension of time necessary to prevent the abandonment of this application, please consider this as a Request for an Extension for the required time period and/or an authorization to charge our Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any fee which may be due. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

HARNES, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.

P. O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

By: David P. Utykanski
David P. Utykanski
Reg. No. 39,052

I hereby certify that this letter, the response attached hereto and, if enclosed, the small entity verification are being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231, on

By: David P. Utykanski B

JA - 0248



PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Group Art: 3671
Examiner: To Be Assigned
Applicant: Richard D. Bednar
Serial No.: 09/548,145
Filed: April 10, 2000
For: GANG-TYPE ROTARY
LAWN MOWER
Attorney Ref.: 7016R-000015/COA

RECEIVED
AUG - 2 2000
TC 3600 MAIL ROOM
PRELIMINARY
AMENDMENT

Hon. Commissioner of Patents
and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to:
Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231 on

By

David R. Thyl

Sir:

Prior to examination of the present application, please consider the following:

IN THE CLAIMS

Please add new claims 21-31, as follows:

(New) A gang-type rotary lawn mower comprising:
a frame supported by front and rear wheels for movement over the ground,

Serial No. 09/546,145
Attorney Docket No. 7016R-000015/COA

a power source which is mounted on said frame and which drives at least two of said wheels,

an operator's seat mounted on said frame,

a steering system enabling the operator to steer said lawn mower,

at least one front rotary cutting deck assembly mounted on said frame in front of said front wheels;

at least one rear rotary cutting deck assembly mounted on said frame behind said front deck assemblies and between said front and rear wheels; and

each of said front and rear deck assemblies including a deck defining a downwardly opening space, at least one cutting blade mounted on a spindle for rotation therewith and at least one roller supporting said deck for movement over the ground, said roller extending substantially across the entire width of said deck.

B,
3
~~3~~ (New) A lawn mower as set forth in claim ~~2~~ wherein each deck assembly is connected to said frame by a respective lifting arm operable to lift the associated deck assembly relative to said frame, such that each of said deck assemblies is connected by its own lifting arm to said frame.

4
~~4~~ (New) A lawn mower as set forth in claim ~~3~~ wherein each of said front and rear deck assemblies includes a pair of laterally-spaced, generally vertically-extending side plates having forward ends, a first front wheel supporting one of said side plates for movement over the ground, and a second front wheel supporting the other of said side plates for movement over the ground, wherein said roller extends between said side plates and supports said side plates for movement over the